1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12



812 829 same experience nor identical traditions, there follows the readily accepted assumption that the world contains different kinds of knowledge and different truths.

814 Despite the fact that the Indian lacks the ability to formulate ideas in strict chronological sequence (we have already referred to the difficulties experienced in securing chronological life histories), he may be credited with a historical sense. Examples of native history have been presented in reporting the traditional ideas of Kaska origins and the memories of life in the aboriginal society. This material is distinguished by its static, rather than dialectic quality, no attempt being made to relate the events which are described. As pointed out in connection with acculturation, the Kaska are not attracted to the past. There is relatively little interest in hearkening back to aboriginal times, certainly no sentimentalism. Only occasionally will a contemporary incident move some man to describe the event as similar to behavior which was commonplace in former days. Such historical attitudes promise that in one or two more generations the ability to report "old fashioned" life will have entirely disappeared.

## ETHICS

577 183 Ethically and morally, as well as philosophically, the Kaska are inclined to be relativists, particularly when non-Indian behavioral norms are discussed. Thus people asked the ethnographer if it was true that white people sometimes married their parallel cousins, whom the Kaska classify as siblings. An affirmative answer met with no criticism or repugnance. Moral relativism is noted chiefly in connection with marital and sexual behavior; aggression and lack of generosity are not so tolerantly regarded. In the latter fields, the Indians tend to recognize more absolute values. Thus the second World War appeared to confuse many informants, and local traders are often criticized for neglecting to meet the Indians' standard of generosity.

The Kaska express the same theoretical conflict between free will and determinism that is familiar to students of western society. As evidence of determinism we may cite the fact that a person is thought to be bad because he has "bad blood." This evil disposition is inherited, so that an evil man produces evil children. Opposing these ideas is the belief that an evil person can be taught to control his behavior. It is possible too for a good man to produce bad children, since it is often through error that good people commit evil—they "make mistake." Although this conflict between free will and determinism comes out in interviews, in everyday life there is little question of the moral accountability of the individual.

Abstract ethical ideals, like righteousness and justice, have little meaning for the Indian. When forced to concern himself with formulating ideal conceptions of human nature, he is primarily concerned with such concrete individual and social virtues as generosity, industriousness, pacificity, courage, skill, and (in women) marital chastity.

885 577 183 The ideal man is first of all generous. He gives good gifts and helps out a friend who is in need of food or of some capital goods like traps or cartridges. A good man is not pugnacious or "mean"; he is disinclined to unfriendly gossip and hypocrisy, nor does he seek to exert authority. He avoids talking unfavorably about his friends, is not cranky, and will not fight unless unduly provoked. Putting these traits more positively, virtue may be recognized in a pleasant disposition. A good man is ready to laugh and eager for fun. When he drinks he enjoys himself, but "he don't fight nothing." Finally, the ideal male reflects industry. He is,